

September 16, 2004

Mr. Billy C. Hamilton  
Mr. Chon Guitierrez  
Co-Executive Directors  
California Performance Review Commission  
1102 Q Street, 6th Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Sirs:

I write this letter as a governing board member of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy since its inception in 1991. This year the State is providing approximately \$224,000 to support the Conservancy. An additional \$100,000 is provided by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments for contract work done by Conservancy staff. What does the State receive for its contribution? The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy provides the forum for all of the stakeholders in this important part of California to coordinate their land acquisition programs as well as their management activities. Since its inception, the Conservancy has been involved in the purchase of over 35,000 acres. In some cases the Conservancy acquired the land; in others, the Conservancy approved grants to others for purchases; and in still other instances, it coordinated and facilitated the gathering of funds, land appraisals, and management.

In specific, the State benefits from the existence of the Conservancy in the following ways:

- 1) The Conservancy is the lead planning agency for a California Natural Community Conservation Plan which is key to preservation of open space and endangered species issues for the State government in both the Coachella Valley and surrounding mountain areas.
- 2) The Conservancy serves as the coordinating body for a variety of State land agencies in the valley including the University of California Natural Reserve system, the California State Parks system, California Fish &

September 16, 2004  
Mr. Billy C. Hamilton  
Mr. Chon Guitierrez  
Page 2

Game lands, California State Wilderness lands and, Wildlife Conservation Board. In addition, the Conservancy brings together Federal land agencies including the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Parks Service. Combining these agencies with local and county agencies gives a coordinated ability to preserve and protect what the Nature Conservancy has referred to as one of America's most important "hot spots" of biological diversity. It is my firm belief that the State of California receives a remarkable benefit for an absolutely minimal investment. Should the Conservancy cease to exist, the kinds of direct coordination between State agencies as a part of the Conservancy board and both Federal and local officials will be impaired. The end result will be less coordination and less effective government for the citizens of the State of California.

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy is a good deal for citizens throughout the State of California and is an excellent use of State resources.

Sincerely,

BUFORD A. CRITES  
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE  
CITY OF PALM DESERT

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER OF  
THE COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Senator Jim Battin  
Senator Denise Ducheny  
Assemblyman John Benoit  
Assemblywoman Bonnie Garcia  
Michael Chrisman, Secretary for Resources